

Introductions

Rev. Marty Hasz, PLPC
 Reconciler with Ambassadors of Reconciliation,
 Coaching, Mediating, Teaching Reconciliation
 Workshop, Group Reconciliation



Missouri District-LCMS
 Assistant to the President for Church Worker &
 Congregational Health
marty.hasz@mo.lcms.org
 (573) 978-2791
www.mo.lcms.org
<https://zoom.us/j/928792921>




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1

I'm not alone in this business...

I'm supposed to be up in your grill.
 I'm a baptized child of God:

"do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if the world is to be judged by you, are you incompetent to try trivial cases? Do you not know that we are to judge angels? How much more, then, matters pertaining to this life!"

1 Co 6:2-3.

"he gave ... shepherds and teachers... to equip the saints... so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro" Eph 4:11-14.



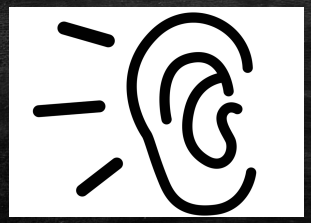
Caleb, Marty, Tom, Dru, Mike



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2

Stewardship of the Reconciler's Emotions



"Blessed are the peacemakers."
 Matthew 5:9

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Anonymous Poll Question:

When you go to meet with conflicted parties, what basic emotion(s) do you feel?

(Note: By recognizing your feelings, you are not assigning a "good" or "bad" value judgement to yourself or the feelings. You are just naming them without critique. Choose all that apply)

- Mad/Anger (Slightly miffed, Frustration, cynical, resentful, sarcastic, judging)
- Sad/Grief (Depressed)
- Glad/Happy (Joy; Not to be confused with cognitive facts which ought to provide a certain feeling. i.e. "Since Jesus loves me, I try not to worry")
- Fear/Afraid (Potential loss, sense of danger, vulnerable/unsafe)

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We can get mixed up. Whose emotions are whose?

Empathy notices & names how someone experiences a situation and the associating emotion being felt with compassion.

Counter-Transference is when the listener gets distracted or entangled with the speaker's situation and begins to own the speaker's issues.

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Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted. Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.

Ga 6:1-2.



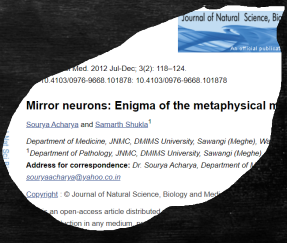
Stewardship of the Reconciler's Emotions as a stewardship of the emotional roller coaster of conflicted parties.

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Is reconciling supposed to feel this way?

... The problem with Empathy

- The Problem of Empathizing is that generally, you can't stop it.
- The reconciler is going to feel every emotion of pain in each and every conflicted party
- You're doing it right if you feel every aspect of their pain at each step.
- There's something wrong with you if you don't feel their pain.
- Discuss: What are some reasons people may not feel empathy? (5 Minutes)



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A Reconciler's Story

What's going to catch you?

"This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. 1 Co 11:25–26.

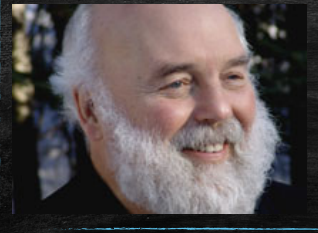
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The problem of "Do not be anxious."

- And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age. -Matthew 28:20.
- A friend of mine got stuck at the law when he heard his pastor say during a sermon that to be anxious was a sin.
- Anxiety of being stuck with anxiety drove him to fight/flight/freeze, feel anger towards his pastor and question God.
- It's in the Bible. We're instructed "do not be anxious".
- In your breakout groups, discuss:
 1. What's the problem?
 - What would you say to a person who is confronted with the law and then emotionally feels anxiety?
 - For example, would you say "Don't feel that feeling. Just don't go there!" ?
 2. What would you say instead?

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Think in terms of a Mechanic Replacing engine parts



https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f_vQ-5tL-Gak

10

What's the Gospel replacement for the anxious emotion/behavior?

Mt 6:28 And why are you **anxious** about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: t
 Mt 6:27 And which of you by being **anxious** can add a single hour to his span of life?
 Lk 12:26 If then you are not able to do as small a thing as that, why are you **anxious** about the rest?
 Lk 12:25 And which of you by being **anxious** can add a single hour to his span of life?
 Mt 6:31 Therefore do not be **anxious**, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'Wh
 1 Pe 5:7 casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you.
 Mt 6:25 "Therefore I tell you, do not be **anxious** about your life, what you will eat or what you will
 will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing?"

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Notice *the Gospel* replacements

Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you. Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world. 10 And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you. To him be the dominion forever and ever. Amen.

The Holy Bible: English Standard Version (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), 1 Pe 5:6-11.

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What role does the Gospel play in moving people toward another conflicted party?

doctrine patterns and brain sites (Parksepp, 1998). Emotions often have "control precedence" (Tronick, 1989), easily overriding other cues and behaviors, especially in important interactions with those we depend on the most. The core emotional responses can be most parsimoniously outlined as follows:

Joy
Surprise
Anger

- **Approach** emotions
 - Joy, evoking relaxed engagement and openness
 - Surprise, evoking curiosity
 - Anger, evoking assertion and moving toward goals
- **Avoidance** emotions
 - Shame, evoking withdrawal and hiding
 - Fear, evoking fleeing or freezing
 - Sadness, evoking withdrawal or comfort

Obviously these emotions can be differentiated further. Shame, for example, has also been viewed by some theorists as including disgust and guilt at specific acts or thoughts. Sadness can include grief and be part of what we normally call hurt feelings. The emotion we refer to as "hurt" is not of itself a conglomerate emotion, rather than a core affect. It has been unpacked into its core elements, namely anger or resentment, sadness and loss, and a feeling of vulnerability or helplessness that involves fear (Fereby, 2003), specifically the fear of not being valued by key others and, therefore, deserted and rejected. While fear



Discuss:
What direction did I move?

Shame
Fear
Sadness

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Emotions-an Affect influencing an Effect

Emotions can be envisioned as our BIG EARS-Listening, Watching, Sensing... organizing & shaping meaning from the input and energizing our programs for action.

"Emotion is not irrational or simply a feeling" that accompanies a thought" (p. 34, Johnson, 2019).

"...it is a high-level system that integrates a person's awareness of ...needs, goals... with feedback from the environment and the predicted consequences of actions" (Frijda, 1986).

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Practice:

Attend to & Steward the *Emotions* of the Reconciler

In Genesis 1:28 we learn that God commanded humans to have the responsibility of shaping & ordering every living thing.

What does it mean to shape or order your emotions?

Jesus calls us to apply love as we shape and order self & others: "Teachery, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?" And he said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets." Matthew 22:36-40

Discuss 1. What are Gospel words for the one managing/stewarding conflict? 2. Who supports you in this reconciliation work?

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Questions & Answers

- Not yet discussed trepidation issues:
- Defining Trauma/Crisis different than one-time conflict, learned helplessness or multiple anxiety provoking events
- Uncontrollable internal or external/outside influences, mental & emotional dysfunctions... autistic issues (mirror neuron must be firing for empathy to function. Panic-fight/flight/freeze won't work.)
- Build in support to manage last minute trepidation. Prayer at the ready/on the way, Greg, John, crank my Jesus music, image Jesus in the seat next to me as I talk through my opening comments & practice opening story/illustration, rehearse the Scriptures catching me as I fall into the Holy Spirit's work.
- Other...

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References

- Ambassadors of Reconciliation www.aorhope.org
- Attachment Theory in Practice by Susan M. Johnson (2019)
- <https://societyforpsychotherapy.org/psychotherapists-face-face-dr-leslie-greenberg/>
- <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3510904/?report=printable>
- Intentional Interviewing and Counseling (8th Ed) Ivey, Ivey, Zalaquett 2014
- [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016)
- The 5 Love Languages by Gary Chapman
- The Relationship Cure by John M. Gottman

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Effective Listening - A Ministry Resource

Romans 8:38–39 (ESV)

... nor present pandemics, nor future social distancing mandates, nor scary-face masks, nor quilted masks... will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Introduction:

When a soothing empathetic ear is in high demand, like during a pandemic, our capacity to listen to the needs of others and respond with thoughtful engagement is severely diminished. Our God-given body senses the visceral suffering of other's. We feel their chaos & pain which propels our *fight, flight or freeze* reaction.

But, I have good news for you. Into your fear, anger & sadness God provides a savior, Jesus. His Word supports your going, reaching, caring. His body and blood offered on the cross and in at the altar soothes your body and blood. Jesus' followers empowered by the Holy Spirit speak His promises into your ear.

Did you notice it? Through Jesus you were comforted. In our affliction we are once again made able to reach out, listen, empathize and comfort people in this pandemic.

The problem: Overtaxed defense mechanisms push us to stop listening, to pull back from others and seek things to remedy our unease. Real quotes from July, 2020:

- "I don't listen to the (TV) news anymore" – Pastor
- "Dad, can you turn off the news" – Teenager
- "We just need guidance! Why can't the elders meet with us!" – Staff Member
- "I've started to unfriend Facebook people who rant" – Friend
- "The school system released their plan for restructuring the day before more restrictions were issued! What do we now?" – Parent
- "We're mandated to wear masks in public? This is unconstitutional!!! – Facebook Post

The Solution: Into this COVID-panicked pool of people is the promise of paradise, provisions poured from eternity for our forgiveness and fellow sinners from the cross of Christ.

Proposed Actions & Change Factors:

1. Interrupt pain with Grace! **Bring Jesus into the moment.** Support from God's Word through God's people turns heads *and* hearts. Tell 'em you love 'em & God loves 'em.
2. Listen by remaining engaged. Abandon abandonment... Put on a mask, rub elbows and be together. Be in-tune with people in pain, **AND YOU WILL CHANGE MOODS.**
3. Take it up a notch to a spiritual conversation about God's Grace in Jesus, **AND YOU WILL BRING HOPE FOR ETERNITY.** Yes, it even works 6 feet away, by phone or video chat.

Act like you are not alone because God never leaves you alone. God's mercy stays engaged.



“Blessed be... the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.”

2 Corinthians 1:3-4 ESV

Faithful Adaptations: Hear what increasing incidences of listening did for others:

- “We plan *regular* walks to get outside, where we can distance yet be together, *see* each other and *talk* about what we’re learning” – Retirement Community Resident
- “I made an *appointment* to talk to my pastor, he listened and then he *connected* me with another pastor who *specialized* in managing issues like mine” – College student
- “Our small group Bible study is sending Bible verses and prayer requests daily by text message to each other” – Mother at home during the stay-at-home order
- “Our family printed devotions from our church website and used them at the dinner table rotating who got to read and pray” – Dad working from home

Guiding Principle #1: Effective Christian Listening uses the Gospel

- Description: It is an *oxymoron* to simultaneously retreat and reach out in a time, but God’s Word is critical & effective during a pandemic! Fear of the COVID is confronted by God’s people and alleviated by the presence of the resurrected Jesus’ promises. When the Good News of Jesus is heard, peace and joy reduce & replace people’s feelings of distress.
- Your hearing of God’s Good News cultivates your capacity to care for others. From our ears to theirs, the Holy Spirit comforts us in our suffering causing it to overflow into the world’s wounded. Practice telling someone else what God has done for you, for all.
- Scripture Reference: “A gentle tongue is a tree of life, but perverseness in it breaks the spirit... The light of the eyes rejoices the heart, and good news refreshes the bones. Proverbs 15:4, 30.
- Discuss: When have you heard someone personally apply God’s Good News to you?
- Discuss: If you were to apply those words of encouragement to someone you know, what would you say to them? See Resource from *Ambassadors of Reconciliation* at www.aorhope.org .

Guiding Principle #2: Assess & steward for the long-haul

- Description: How ministers “survive & thrive” through it all depends on 5 interdependent resilient factors found by researchers Burns, Chapman & Guthrie (2013). The following items cannot be separated without the diminishing resilience effect. Losing one component ruins the quality of all the others. They include:
 - Spiritual Formation



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- Self-Care
- Emotional & Cultural Intelligence
- Marriage & Family
- Leadership & Management
- Our “listening” capacity is monster sized, but in order to keep hearing each other, we need God’s miraculous assurance at every point of hearing, seeing or feeling.
- **Listen Effectively with Support (Eph. 4:12)**, by regularly gathering *with people who listen well...to God & others*.
- Discuss: Who do you meet with on a regular basis to hold private conversations where confession and absolution can be shared for mutual care and consolation?
- Discuss: What are the barriers of gathering to share personal and professional growth discussions and prayer?

Guiding Principle #3: Assess & Steward your emotions

- Name: A Stewardship of Emotions
- Description: We are swimming in an environment of conflicts, which send us in circles. And, although you’ve not likely added “manage my emotions” to your schedule, God desires to bring the joy of His salvation to your pandemic experience. Putting our emotions on a to do list frees us from handling them solely in a tight moment.
- **“Blessed be... the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.” 2 Corinthians 1:3-4 ESV**
- **Listen to your current emotions:** Can you name what you are feeling? Become self-aware of what. You are feeling and respectfully manage/steward them in the relationships where they originated. Putting off attendance of our experience assumes that we can handle the burdens without reconciling problems nor thanking God for providing earthly & spiritual blessings.
- **Listen to your past emotions:** Do you need to release some grudges or do you hang onto them as leverage? Guilt has very little power to foster positive change compared to actual support. Most of the time people don’t look close enough to forgive the innumerable negative influences that contribute to a particular failure. Forgiveness is applicable to ever part of a damaging offense, but most of the time we need our loved ones’ support to go that deep.
- **Listen to your future emotions:** Do you sense a threat, danger or unease? How about an unavoidable conflict or disagreement of values, loss or fear of loss? The whole Christian church on earth is called upon to serve, not just you, not alone and not without calling upon God for appropriate resources. As you look into the lengthy COVID pandemic, adjusting is a group task for God’s people.
- Discuss when you might add “listening to my emotions” to your calendar and what it might look, sound or feel like to assess & attend to your emotions.



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- Try naming the emotions you are currently feeling or look up some feeling words to pick from and what you might say to your significant others about them.

FAQs:

- This paper is limited to a brief presentation of much more extensive researched subjects. This material is presented in order to encourage further discussion and resourcing of church workers and congregations of the Missouri District-LCMS.
- For further dialog or inquiry about this paper or to find other resources on this topic, contact Rev. Marty Hasz, PLPC, Assistant to the President for Church Worker and Congregational Health; <https://mo.lcms.org/>
- The author encourages further self-study & group Bible study in the context and relationship of a local LCMS congregation and/or pastor.

References and Resources:

Resilient Ministry-What Pastors told us about Surviving and Thriving by Bob Burns, Tasha D. Chapman & Donald C. Guthrie, 2013.

Built on The Rock-The Healthy Congregation, 2017, by Ted Kober

<https://www.aorhope.org/product-page/announcing-god-s-grace-form>

“Listen, Listen God is calling, through the word inviting, offering forgiveness, comfort and joy”
(https://youtu.be/UMFFj_4WR1j); LSB #833, words by H. S. Olson, tune by A. C. Lovelace)

The Spiritually Vibrant Home-The Power of Messy Prayers, Loud Tables and Open Doors by Don Everets, 2020; <https://www.lhm.org/households/>

Next Steps: As a simple Good News next step, take a look at the virtual conference offered by Ambassadors of Reconciliation across August and September 2020. It’s offered for free and the first ones are coming up in just a couple of weeks. You can take a look at the dozens of speakers and workshop titles starting now and register for any of the Gospel centered sessions. You can find it at <https://www.aorhope.org/conf2020>. It’s an easy first start, but it will also give you a taste of hearing someone speaking the Good News of our Lord Jesus to you while remaining COVID safe.

Concluding Thought: YOU ARE NOT LISTENING ALONE. Effective Care, Effective Listening, Effective ministry is possible BECAUSE GOD LISTENED FIRST! From the first moment of human sin God promised the Savior, and God’s care will never fail you. “[Jesus said] I am with you always, *to the end of the age*” Matthew 28:20